PRECIS WRITING

INTRODUCTION

Writing a precis means making an intelligent summary of a long passage. To write a precis one should have a clear understanding of the passage: only then well one be able to include all the essential points and tips and tricks of essay examples in the precis.

A precis should be in the language of the precis-writer. The original passage is not to be reduced in length by just removing unimportant or unnecessary sentences and by reproducing the rest as the precis. It should be a brief gist or summary of the passage expressed in the writer's own words.

A precis should be full i.e. it should contain all the essential thoughts, ideas or fact in the original passage. It should not contain repetitions or observations that are not relevant to the main theme of the original.

A precis is always written in Reported Speech. The passage given may be a speech made by a person in Direct Speech, but the precis is to be in Reported Speech and in the Third Person and in the Past tense.

Techniques of Precis-writing

There three kinds of work to be done in producing a clear and successful precis. They are (1) Reading, (2) Writing and (3) Revision.

READING

Read the passage carefully: If one reading is not enough to give you a general idea of its meaning, then read it a second time. As you read, find out the subject or the theme of the passage and what is said about the subject.

It will be a good thing if you find out the lead or the topic sentence. The lead sentence will help you to see the subject clearly. It will also help you to think of a title for the precis example.

Further reading may be necessary at this stage to make sure that the details of the passage are also understood. Read the passage more slowly this time, even sentence by sentence, and make sure that everything in the passage is understood. If this is not done, it is likely that you will miss something important, especially if it is expressed by a short phrase or a single word.

Now comes the process of selection. The writer of the precis writing passages has to decide what facts or ideas in the passage are essential and what are of secondary or no importance. Taking the main ideas of the passages as your point of reference, it should not be too difficult to write out the important points in the original in a corner of your writing work sheet.

WRITING

You should first prepare a draft of the precis, keeping in mind, the need to reduce he original to one-third its length. The main thoughts expressed in the passage, the ideas it contains, the opinions presented and the conclusion arrived at should figure in the rough draft. Unimportant things like the names of people and places and dates should not figure in it.

It may so happen that your first draft is too long or that it sounds rather jerky. Shorten it if necessary and write out a careful second draft during college preparation. Sometimes you may need to work out three or even four drafts, but with reasonable care and concentration, you should normally succeed in producing good precis writing by the second draft.

Remember that a precis or essay is a connected whole and that it should read smoothly and continuously, Get more advice and tips for more study tips for online education sites.

REVISION

When you have made your second (or final) draft, carefully revise it before writing out the fair copy.

PASSAGE – 1

The two questions most often asked about an economic system are whether it serves man's physical needs and whether it is consistent with his liberty. There is, today, little doubt as to the ability of the industrial system to serve man's needs. It serves them, indeed abundantly. It requires however, a mechanism for making men want what it provides. But this mechanism would not work – wants would not be subjected to manipulation, had not these wants been dulled by sufficiency.

The prospects for liberty involve far more interesting questions. It has always been imagined especially by conservatives that to associate all, or a large part, of economic activity with the State is to endanger freedom. The individual and his preference, in one way or another, will be sacrificed to the needs and conveniences of the apparatus created ostensibly to serve him. As the industrial system evolves into a wing of the State, the question of its relation to liberty thus arises in urgent form. In recent years, in the Soviet type economics, there has been an ill-conceived conflict between the State and the intellectuals. In essence, this has been a conflict between those for whom the needs of the Government, including above all its needs as economic planner and producer of goods, are preeminent, and those who assert the high and inconvenient claims of uninhibited intellectual and artistic expression. Is this a warning?

The instinct which warns of danger in this association of economic and political power is sound. But conservatives have looked in the wrong direction for the danger. They have feared that the State might reach out and destroy the vigorous money making entrepreneur. They have not noticed that all the while, the successors to the entrepreneur were uniting themselves even more closely with the State and rejoicing in the result. They were also, and with enthusiasm, accepting abridgement of their freedom. Part of this implicit in the subordination of individual personality to the needs of organization. Some of it is in the exact pattern of the classical business expectation. The head of an aircraft manufacturing firm will hardly ever dare to speak candidly or mildly critically of the Air Force. No modern head on any large scale manufacturing firm will venture to use strong language even in respect of manifest foolishness and absurdity in the policies of Government. The modern business tycoons will not seek to defy or seem to defy Government. Manners? Etiquette? Perhaps! But it would also be conceded that 'too much is at stake'.

The problem however, is not the freedom of the businessman. Big business oratory about freedom and liberty is a thing of the past. It is almost a rule now that those who speak most of liberty are least inclined to use it. The top business executive who speaks eloquently, almost fulsomely, about personal freedom, carefully submits his speeches on the subject for review and elimination of controversial work, phrases and ideas, as befits a good organization plan. The general who tells his troops, and the world, that they are in the forefront of the fight for freedom is a man who has always submitted happily to army discipline. The high government official who adverts feeling to the values of freedom and democracy extravagantly admires the orthodoxy of his own views.

The danger to liberty lies in the subordination of belief to the needs of the industrial system. In this the State and the industrial system will be partners.

If we continue to believe that the goods of the industrial system – the expansion of output, increased consumption, technological advance, and the public images that sustain it – are coordinate with life, then all our lives will be in the service of these goods. What is consistent with these ends we shall have or be allowed; all else will be off limits. Our wants will be managed in accordance with the needs of the industrial system, the politics of the state will be subject to similar influence; education will be adapted to industrial need. The discipline required by the industrial system will be the conventional morality of the community. All other goals will be made to seem unimportant or anti-social. We will be bound to the ends of the industrial system. The State will add its moral, and perhaps some of its legal power to their enforcement. What will emerge; finally, will be the benign servitude of the household retainer who is taught to love her mistress and see her interests as her own, and not the enforced servitude of the field hand. But it will not be freedom.

If, on the other hand, the industrial system is only a part, and relatively a diminishing part of life, there is much less occasion for concern. Aesthetic goals will have pride of place; those who serve them will not be subject to the goals of the industrial system; the industrial system itself will be subordinate to the claims of these dimensions of life. Intellectual activity will be for its own sake and not for the better service of the industrial system. Men will not be entrapped by the belief that apart from the goals of the industrial system, apart from the production of goods and income by progressively more advanced technical methods, there is nothing important in life.

This being so, we may realize, over the years, that the industrial system is essentially a technical arrangement for providing goods and services in adequate volume. Those who rise through its bureaucracy will so see themselves. And the political consequences will be in keeping with this, for if the economic goals are the only goals of society, it is only natural that the industrial system should dominate the State and the State serves its ends. If the other goals are strongly asserted, the industrial system will fall into its place as a detached and autonomous arm of the State, but responsive to the large purposes of society. (990 words) **[OAS – 2006]**

PRECIS

Man's wants are unlimited. Though industrial production profusely caters to his needs, it has never been able to satisfy all his needs. Some conservatives are of the views that man's economic activities in its entirety should not be subjected to government control. Even if it is an integral part of state, industrial system cannot be expected to ensure individual liberty in terms of economic wants. State is limited in its reach. It cannot feed to all aspects of human liberty. The Soviet model of state and individual conflict vouches for this claim. There has been growing insubordination of economic power to the wills of political power as the latter dictates terms to the former in policy making. It is similar in organisations where the head seldom speak of individual liberty. No organization can do anything at the cost of its existence and progress. Industrial or economic organisations are in a greater way controlled by political system prevailing in the country. Individual Liberty is a buzzword neither in the business world nor in organisations. They publicly go for larger organizational interests many times against their personal liking and disliking. However if economic power becomes dominant behemoth usurping the state domain, we shall become claimless serfs to it. Life has many more to give beyond our economic needs. Intellectual activities, quest for aesthetic pleasure and exploring the hidden truths of life on this earth have far more implications for him as a social being. Men should realize that there are more important and vital needs than only economic needs. The latter is only an attachment to his eventful life. The state should vigorously aim at the collective growth of its subjects and not only of their economic needs. Thereby the industrial system becomes a detached and autonomous part of the state. It then becomes serving to some of man's needs and not mastering his other needs. The major purpose is to make the economic power responsive to the larger purpose of society. (330 words)

PASSAGE – 2

Non-alignment is a concept which was propounded in this country. But I suggest that the concept has no meaning in the present day unless you also are innovative in science and technology. What does 'being innovative in science and technology' mean? It means that you must create some new products, goods and services which are better than, or at least equal in quality to those which anybody else can produce. It also means that our technology should specifically address our problems, irrespective of whether it is very simple or highly sophisticated. You cannot have a scientific and technological society which is dependent for everything it uses on innovations from abroad. If you have such a society it may appear to be very glittering society for a while but it cannot be non-aligned or self-reliant and the glitter won't last. It will be dependent society. To the extent it is a dependent society your cultural parameters will be largely defined by the science and technology or industry, for that matter, is not created in vacuum. It is created because of urges of certain segments of the originating society. If it comes to you in the same form you will be forced to organize your own living in such a way that you conform to it and, in addition, you may have to pay for it in other ways, either through your independence or through the riches created by your poor, making them poorer still.

If we look at our country we find two things, Yes, there is a great deal of science and technology in the country. I do believe that in many areas we have people who are equal to the best anywhere in the world. But, yet, if we try to look for things which we have created which are equal to the best anywhere in the world. But, yet, if we try to look for things which we have created which are equal to or better than anybody else's mind which bear our stamp, we will not find too many. Most of our industry is based on transfer o know-how. Most of the glittering goods we are beginning to find these days – whether they are television sets, or VCRs or much of our telecommunication systems and computers, even toys, at least in metropolitan areas, are all copies of what is obtained abroad. There are other things, of course, which are our own; there are many arts and crafts which are our own and better than anybody else's. There are the potters things, the tie and dye techniques for fabrics and fashions. There is the famous 'lota' which Charles Eames talked about. There are also, in the technical areas many things which I think we have done rather well but which we have not been able to produce in a way, in a quantity, so to dominate any markets outside. And yet there is a lot of potential. One can see enormous number of bits and pieces all over the country where tremendous amount of innovativeness has been displayed which, however, have been put aside on the excuse that we cannot meet time-targets, some trivial international standards are not met, or because of other reasons, vested interests of various kinds, influence of multinationals or what have you. Any time in any area of technology, you find tremendous pressure coming in which want you to put it aside, which accuse you of trying to re-invent the wheel. Nobody ever asks the question ; why do the French make their telephone instruments themselves while the British had it already, and the Americans had it already, and the Americans had it already and Germans also it make it themselves and Italians and Japanese? Why don't they all buy the telephone instruments all from America or all from Japan? I suggest that in science and technology you cannot imbibe the true spirit the craft unless you do some things on your own, do your own inventing. It is necessary to make science and technology your own.

You should ask the question; why are the Japanese, and the Germans and French and Americans all engaged in developing micro-processors and putting their own stamp? Why do they make the instruments somewhat different, in different countries, introducing minor changes, besides putting their brand names? Why must we compare ourselves with the technologically least advanced countries, and try to get everything from outside? In fact, you find that as soon as you are able to get to a situation where you are beginning to do something on your own there are various ways of killing it. Somebody will suddenly come with a loan offer coupled with a collaboration agreement, perhaps allowing you to use an Indian-foreign hyphenated brand name. It is easy money for some industry, a few middlemen and everybody jumps at it : all the innovation which may have happened and could have fortified is killed. There have been a few survivors, but these are exceptions to the rule. It would be a miracle if the recent bold experiment of mobilizing indigenous science and engineering talent to design, build and market electronic switches of high performance is allowed to grow to its full potential. The blocking action is already on. It is understandable that foreign collaboration is much more lucrative. We do not understand, deeply enough, that something which is beginning to grow here beyond a certain threshold is very precious ; that if we kill it we will kill all innovation in that sector for a long time to come. Innovation withers very fast if its products are not picked up, if it goes unrecognized. Countries which have grown a culture of innovation have done so by sustaining by protecting it from outside ; yes, critically examining it not taking any nonsense and yet remaining conscious of its future potential, not only for meeting short term requirements. Unless we have such a supportive attitude towards invention and innovations in the country it is unlikely that we will be able to stand in this tremendously competitive world where everybody is out to push his own things. (992 words)

[OAS – 2006]

PRECIS

Non-alignment is a condition exists in a country in the true sense of the term where there is not only political independence but also independence in pursuing science and technology. If production in a country is based on the borrowed technologies and if the country does not have own innovation inventory, it can in no way be called non-aligned. So a self-sufficient nation in all respects especially in the field of expertise in economic production at least for its own people, is unanimously taken as a non-aligned entity. India is not non-aligned to the fullest when we consider its limited producing capacity. In this heyday of science and technology, a country like India is yet produce electronic appliances, computer gadgets and much of our telecommunication system to name a few. In fine most of our industrial products are engineered on borrowed know-how. Although we have done rather well in many areas were technology is used, much is left to be done. We have not yet produced as many goods from our own innovations which can dominate foreign market. It is not that we have potential to produce goods in huge number applying our own expertise and innovation. We lack mindset and a congenial atmosphere free from vested interests and selfish motives of a few. We are eager to use a foreign brand for the product which has been designed on our expertise, because of our baseless hope for its high sale. Even if foreign collaboration is lucrative, we should not kill our own knowledge and idea in the pursuit of temporary pecuniary benefits. We have enough potential to grow as self-sufficient industrially-rich nation. What we need today is a passion for indigenous ways for production protecting ourselves from outside influence in such matters. Devoid of nonsense approach to our production system, we should have supportive attitude towards inventions and innovations inside the country. We can then be tough enough to face the acutely completive world and be non-aligned in letter and spirit. (332 words)

PASSAGE – 3

Scientific method, simple as it is in essence, has been acquired only with great difficulty, and is still employed only by a minority, who themselves confine its employment to a minority of the questions upon which they have opinions. If your number among your acquaintances some eminent man of science, accustomed to the minutest quantitative precision in his experiments and the most abstruse skill in his inference from them, you will be also to make him the subject of a little experiment which is likely to be by no means unilluminating. If you tackle him on party politics, theology, income tax, house agents, bumptiousness of the working classes and other topics of a like nature, you are pretty sure, before long, to provoke an explosion and to hear him expressing wholly untested opinions with a dogmatism which he would never display in regard to the well-founded results of his laboratory experiments.

As this illustration shows, the scientific attitude is in some degree unnatural to man; the majority of our opinions are wise-fulfillments, like dreams in the Freudian theory. The mind of the most rational among us may be compared to a stormy ocean of passionate convictions based upon desire, upon which float perilously few tiny boats carrying a cargo of scientifically tested beliefs. Nor is this altogether to be deplored; life has to be lived, and there is no time to test rationally all the beliefs by which our conduct is to be regulated. Without a certain wholesome rashness, no one could long survive. Scientific method, therefore, must in its very nature, be confined to the more solemn and official of our opinions. A medical man who gives advice on diet should give it after full consideration of all that science has to say on the matter, but the man who follows his advice cannot stop to verify it, and is obliged to rely, therefore, not upon science, but upon his belief that his medical adviser is scientific. A community impregnated with science is one in which the recognized experts have arrived at their opinions by scientific methods, but it is impossible for ordinary citizen to repeat the work of the experts for himself. There is in the modern world, a great body of well attested knowledge on all kinds of subjects which the ordinary man accepts on authority without any need for hesitation; but as soon as any strong passion intervenes to warp the expert's judgment, he becomes unreliable, whatever scientific equipment he may possess. The views of medical men on pregnancy, child birth and location were until fairly recently impregnated with sadism. It required, for example, more evidence to persuade them that anaesthetics may be used in child birth than it would have required to persuade them of the opposite. Anyone who desires an hour's amusement may be advised to look up the tergiversations of eminent craniologists in their attempts to prove from brain measurements that women are stupider than men.

It is not however, the lapses of scientific men that concern us when we are trying to describe scientific method. A scientific opinion is one which there is some reason to believe true; an unscientific opinion is one which is held for some reason other than its probable truth. Our age is distinguished from all ages before the seventeenth century by the fact that some of our opinions are scientific in the above sense except bare matters of fact, since generality in a greater of less degree is an essential characteristic of science and since men (with the exception of a few mystics) have never been able wholly to deny the obvious facts of their everyday existence. The Greeks, eminent as they were in almost every department of human activity, did surprisingly little for the creation of science. The great intellectual achievement of the Greeks was geometry, which they believed to be an a priori study proceeding from self-evident premise and not requiring experimental verification. The Greek genius was deductive rather than inductive and was therefore at home in mathematics. In the ages that followed, Greek mathematics was nearly forgotten, while other products of the Greek passion for deduction survived and flourished notably theology and law. The Greeks observed the world as poets rather than as men of science, partly, I think, because all manual activity was ungentlemanly, so that any study that required experiment seemed a little vulgar. Perhaps it would be fanciful to connect with this prejudice the fact that that department in which the Greeks were most scientific was astronomy, which deals with bodies that only can be seen and not touched.

However that may be, it is certainly remarkable how much the Greeks discovered in astronomy. They early decided that the earth was round and some of them arrived at Copernician theory that it is the earth's rotation and not the revolution of the sun and stars. Archimedes, writing to King Gelon of Syracuse, says : 'Aristarchus of Samos brought out a book consisting of some hypotheses of which the premises lead to the conclusion that the universes is many times greater than that now so called. His hypotheses are that the fixed stars and the sun remain unmoved, that the earth revolves about the sun in the circumference of a circle, the sun lying in the centre of the orbit.' Thus the Greeks discovered not only the diurnal rotation of the earth but also its annual revolution about the sun. (909 words)

[OAS – 2011]

PRECIS

Scientific attitudes and methods are not natural to human beings. Science and scientists are beyond the grasp of common or ordinary people. Except science there are uses of theoretical assumption and unproven opinions in other areas of human activity. Scientific opinions are wish-fulfillment like Freudian theory. The mind which is involved in scientific experiments is a lone sailor in the ocean of knowledge reaches with tested exploits. Most of these exploits born of scientific mind are narrow and partial in its approach and application. All beliefs and opinions that regulate life cannot be put under scientific scanner. Ordinary people accept scientific advice not on the basis of their knowledge in science which they seldom possess but on his belief that the adviser is scientific. They take in almost all scientific sermons on all kinds of subject without even slightest hesitation. Few have the expertise to measure the veracity of any saying said by scientists. But, if established faith goes against these measurements or facts, then the scientist and his experiments become redundant. There is some reason to believe that a scientific opinion is veracious, whereas an unscientific opinion or dogma is believed on the bases of some other reasons rather than its inherent truth. Scientific opinions are not fully true in the sense that they are generalized. Facts related to man's existence and his relations to the vast universe are yet to be fully touched by scientific wand. The Greek was deficient in their expertise in science. They excelled every branch of human study except in scientific study.

The only branch of science where they proved their mettle was astronomy not a pure science. Science is therefore, not a panacea to all human queries. Even methods and approaches other than scientific have given many accepted truths about our creation even though they are not proven and diagnosed scientifically. (308 words)

PASSAGE - 4

If this century has, in the famous phrase, made the world safe for democracy, the next challenge is to make a world safe for diversity. It is in India's interest to ensure that the world as a whole must reflect the idea that is already familiar to all Indians — that it shouldn't matter what the colour of your skin is, the kind of food you eat, the sounds you make when you speak, the God you choose to worship (or not), so long as you want to play by the same rules as everybody else, and dream the same dreams. It is not essential in a democratic world to agree all the time, as long as we agree on the ground rules of how we will disagree. These are the global principles we must strive to uphold if we are to be able to continue to uphold them securely at home.

We want a world that gives us the conditions of peace and security that will permit us to grow and flourish, safe from foreign depredations but open to external opportunities. Whether global institutions adapt and revive will be determined by whether those in charge are capable of showing the necessary leadership. Right now many of us would suggest that there is a global governance deficit. Reversing it would require strong leadership in the international community by a number of powers, including the emerging ones. India is an obvious contender to provide some of that leadership. India should aim not just at being powerful - it should set new standards for what the powerful must do.

This is a huge challenge, and one to which India must rise. An analogy from another field is not encouraging; many would argue that India has not acquitted itself well when given the chance to have global impact in one domain — that of the sport of cricket, where India accounts for more than 80 percent of the game's revenues and perhaps 90 percent of its viewership, giving it an impact on the sport that no country can rival. Clearly, international opinion does not believe that in its domination of world cricket, India has set new standards for what the powerful must do. Broadening the analogy to global geopolitics, one could well say: India, your world needs you.

So India must play its due part in the stewardship of the global commons (including everything from the management of the Internet to the rules governing the exploitation of outer space). We can do it. India is turning increasingly outward as a result of our new economic profile on the global stage, our more dispersed interests around the world, and the reality that other countries, in our neighbourhood as well as in Africa, are looking to us for support and security. India has the ability and the vision to promote global partnerships across the broad range of its interests; it only needs to act.

The world economic crisis should give us an opportunity to promote economic integration with our neighbours in the subcontinent who look to the growing Indian market to sell their goods and maintain their own growth. But as long as South Asia remains divided by futile rivalries, and some continue to believe that terrorism can be a useful instrument of their strategic doctrines that is bound to remain a distant prospect. We in South Asia need to look to the future, to an interrelated future on our subcontinent, where geography becomes an instrument of opportunity in a mutual growth story, where history binds rather than divides, where trade and cross-border links flourish and bring prosperity to all our people. (603 words) **[IAS - 2014]**

PRECIS

India's cardinal principle of 'unity in diversity' should be promoted world over by India herself. The whole world is required to have unanimous global rules and outlook in both common and disagreeable matters. Necessary and panoramic leadership is the need of the hour for establishing a secured and mutual world order free from hegemony. India has much to contribute positively and creatively to the emergence of this new world order. India has to show a kind of leadership which will exert the developed countries. An Indian model of some area of human activity or thought must come to the fore to draw attention of the powerful as India can set new standards in cricket for making it accepted by every country in the world. Being the largest not only in manpower but also in democracy India needs to have prominent presence in this globalized world. She has the capability and resilience to set a paradigm for other countries in economic field. On the basis of its growing market India can play a proactive role in integrating South Asian economies utilizing its common history and integrated geography and by burying hatchet among the constituents with a view to bringing prosperity to our people. (202 words)

PASSAGE - 5

Honesty in business dealings or in other areas are not the only measures of morals and values. The strength of character of a person is also measured by uncompromising aversion to cowardice, intrigue, envy, ambiguity, falsehood, disloyalty, treachery, in short, all undignified actions. There are, in reality, few human beings endowed with a truly spotless character. This is because an almost immaculate character does not exist until the last lives in human form. Educated individuals are not necessarily endowed with good morals and values. In fact, some of them use education and their intellect as a tool for deceit. However, the advantages and the need for education and culture cannot be denied. They contribute largely for the development of intellectual ability and the power to reason, which are the means by which the spirit analyses, compares, infers and arrives at conclusions in the search for truth about the meaning of life. The most precious assets of the soul are its morals and values, but they are not easy to build. The character of each person requires longer periods of thoughtfulness, reasoning and the practice of those values, during many reincarnations, in the course of which, ideas sink in under life experiences. It is only after enduring much disillusionment, grief, injustice and ingratitude for many successive corporeal lives, that a person will be able to measure, in the innermost recesses of his soul, the extent of human moral misery. Then, disgusted, he rebels against it and opens the door to a more ethical and honourable life. Thus, having known and experienced suffering, the spirit, in countless reincarnations, gradually frees itself from evil actions and, through enlightenment and conviction follows the rigid tracks of a flawless conduct. It is of great significance to talk about morals and values but it is also crucial to define the lines of character that everyone should consider in their lives. Some of the most important ones are: good judgement, fairness, common sense, punctuality, loyalty, courage, magnanimity, dignity, gratitude, politeness, faithfulness, moderation, truthfulness, self-respect, respect for others, etc. All these qualities, if properly cultivated, compose a prime set of dignifying virtues which accounts for a refined character. For example, we all make mistakes and to err is human. However, once an honest person is advised and becomes convinced of his mistake, he should admit it and try not to repeat it. Unfortunately it is common practice to conceal one's mistakes, instead of avoiding them. This is very detrimental to spiritual growth. Most people seldom use impartiality and justice in the innermost evaluation of their own actions. Even those who are too harsh in the judgement of other people's actions, for whom they always have words of criticism and reproach, do not escape the usual tendency. When their own faults are concerned, they find a full, lenient, absolvent justification. In this way, not only it denotes lack of character, but mistakes often end up incorporated to human habits. By acting this way, an individual loses his self-respect and his sense of character and dignity and becomes corrupted. What everyone should do, is to face up his mistakes and avoid new mistakes, by improving his sense of morals and values, with the help of his will-power. (537 words) **[IAS - 2013]**

PRECIS

Not honesty alone but our unyielding aversion to demeaning actions together forms the yardstick of morals and values. Education and cultural awareness rear reasoning and ability in man to discover the true meaning of life. Moral and values, precious to soul, are built in by a seasoned character. The character to be seasoned requires passing through thoughts, reasons, and values inherent in many lives. After long endurance of plight and hardship in the cycle of birth man becomes able to transcend to an ethical and honourable life. Only the moving cycle of rebirth purifies the mundane soul which afterwards leads a holy life. Apart from the highness of morals and values, there is a great significance of character. A refined character is a product of many goods senses and qualities nurtured and practised by its holder. His honest mind's honest admission of own guilt and with a vow not to repeat the mistakes leads towards his spiritual upliftment. A characterless person who is devoid of morals and values always finds fault with others and absolves himself of any mistake. (179 words)

PASSAGE – 6

People write and publish autobiographies and autobiographical sketches for a number of reasons. One of these reasons is to put on record the events of a famous or influential career. But not all autobiographies, not even the autobiographies most frequently and widely read, are by famous or extraordinary men. Another reason is to hand on to others, wisdom won through experience and hard labour. Yet many fine autobiographers seem to have little concern to teach or to persuade. A third reason is to distill from past experience events, persons, and situations which hold a firm place in memory, and to put true values on them. In this sense, autobiography is, as Somerset Maugham has said, a 'summing-up', and its first utility is to its author himself.

Whatever its purpose or the fame of the man who writes it, autobiography is a thing created out of the recollections of life. It is not life itself. Whether it be valuable or useless depends upon whether it is well- or ill- made. Good autobiographies can be mined from inconspicuous lives.

For autobiography is the inclusive and summary form of what we call 'themes of experience'. It may contain reminiscences, descriptions of places, of animals, of people, the identification of characteristic preferences and prejudices, and other matters as well. It has the traits of all these minor forms.

An autobiography is objectively true, but is not indiscriminately inclusive. It presents a selection of detailed episodes with sufficient fullness to preserve their essential qualities. It is usually written within the framework defused by a consistent point of view. It presents its subject in more than two dimensions, fusing the person and his actions with setting, manner and purpose. One further trait of autobiographical writing raises a few special problems: by its nature autobiography tempts its author to proceed chronologically. The events sort themselves by the calendar, and it is a natural impulse of every autobiographer to begin with the words "I was born on …."

Strict chronological arrangement poses a discipline of some force. It is by no means easy to "begin at the beginning, go until you come to the end, and then stop." Considerations other than the calendar have a way of forcing their way to notice. With due care, however, a chronological autobiography can be accomplished.

It is important to remember that chronology is not the only principle by which autobiography can be organized. Benjamin Franklin, whose procedure in his autobiography is basically chronological, does not hesitate to recognize the Philadelphia girl who laughed at him as the very one who subsequently became his wife. Joseph Conrad prefers the pattern of walking tour to that of the calendar, and his richly imaginative account is stored with pertinent associations of the past with the present and future. Often, to the autobiographer, it seems that life does not pass so much as it accumulates. Qualities emerge as identities independent of time. For this reason, we should not as we write feel compelled to maintain a steady rate of advance through the time marks of our stories. Like Hazlitt on his journey, we linger over a choice adventure or a valued friend, and then, if we choose, we skip a few years to catch up. (541 words) **[IAS - 2013]**

PRECIS

There are many reasons for sketching an autobiography. It is sketched to record eventful life of the famous, to hand on to the posterity the hard-earned wisdom and also to reshape the past in one's life. Not all the widely read autobiographies are written by the renowned. Good autobiographies can be written by a nondescript. The intent of a good autobiography is to describe life in a presentable format. It is a bound of umpteen experiences of life. The content it contains is true but not conclusive in presentation. It includes in it selective perspectives that preserves the thematic importance of the life it holds. There are several traits applied to pen an autobiography. Successful chronological arrangements of life's events need careful attention and forceful presentation. Sometimes, chronological viewpoint which describes the temporal sequence of the life is less attractive than other ways of writing an autobiography like accounting memorable events and their link with contemporary time, adventures in autobiographer's life. Famous autobiographers like Benjamin Franklin had sometimes run away from chronological viewpoint of sketching their autobiographies and been successful. (180 words)

PASSAGE - 7

There is some similarity between Italy and India. Both are ancient countries with long traditions of culture behind them, though Italy is a newcomer compared to India, and India is a much more vast country. Both are split up politically and yet the conception of Italia, like that of India, never died, and in all their diversity the unity was predominant. In Italy the unity was largely a Roman unity, for that great city had dominated the country and been the fount and symbol of unity. In India there was no such single centre of dominant city, although Benares might well be called the Eternal City of the East, not only for India, but also for Eastern Asia. But, unlike Rome, Benares never dabbled in empire or thought of temporal power. Indian culture was so wide spread all over India that no part of the country could be called the heart of that culture. From Kanyakumari to Amarnath and Badrinath in the Himalayas, from Dwarka to Puri, the same ideas coursed, and if there was a clash of ideas in one place, the noise of it soon reached distant parts of the country.

Just as Italy gave the gift of culture and religion to Western Europe, India did so to Eastern Asia though China was as old and venerable as India. And even when Italy was lying prostrate politically, her life coursed through the veins of Europe. It was Metternich, who called Italy a "geographical expression", and many a would-be Metternich has used that phrase for India, and strangely enough, there is a similarity even in their geographical positions in the two continents.

More interesting is the comparison of England with Austria, for has not England of the twentieth century been compared to Austria of the nineteenth century, proud and haughty and imposing still, but with the roots that gave strength shriveling up and decay eating its way into the mighty fabric. It is curious how one cannot resist the tendency to give an anthropomorphic form to a country. Such is the force of habit and early associations. India becomes Bharat Mata, Mother India, a beautiful lady, very old but ever youthful in appearance, sad-eyed and forlorn, cruelly treated by aliens and outsiders, and calling upon her children to protect her. Some such picture rouses the emotions of hundreds of thousands and drives them to action and sacrifice. And yet India is in the main, the peasant and the worker, not beautiful to look at, for poverty is not beautiful.

Does the beautiful lady of our imaginations represent the bare-bodied and bent workers in the fields and factories? Or the small group of those who have from ages past crushed the masses and exploited them, imposed cruel customs on them and made many of them even untouchable? We seek to cover truth by the creatures of our imaginations and endeavour to escape from reality to a world of dreams. And yet, despite these different classes and their mutual conflicts there was a common bond which united them in India, and one is amazed at its persistence and tenacity and enduring vitality. What were these strengths due to? Nor merely the passive strength and weight of inertia and tradition, great as these always are. There was an active sustaining principle, for it resisted successfully powerful outside influences and absorbed internal forces that rose to combat it.

And yet with all its strength it could not preserve political freedom or endeavour to bring about political unity. These latter do not appear to have been considered worth much trouble; their importance was very foolishly ignored, and we have suffered for this neglect. Right through history the old Indian ideal did not glorify political and military triumph, and it looked down upon money and the professional money-making class. Honour and wealth did not go together, and honour was meant to go, at least in theory, to the men who served the community with little in the shape of financial reward. The old culture managed to live through many a fierce storm and tempest, but though it kept its outer form, it lost its real content. Today it is fighting silently and desperately against a new and all-powerful opponent the bania civilization of the capitalist West. It will succumb to this newcomer, for the West brings science, and science brings food for the hungry millions. But the West also brings an antidote to the evils of this cut-throat civilization – the principles of socialism, of cooperation, and service to the community for the common good. (759) **[IAS-2004]**

PRECIS

Both India and Italy have had ancient culture and long traditions. Unity and diversity has been the cardinal principle of both of them. Unlike Rome India lacked a power centre though Banares used to play the role of being the cultural and religious hub in the past. Indian culture with all its ideals and influences was ubiquitous in India. Even the slightest clash or infighting could sound awkward in every Indian ear. Apart from China, India had outstanding contribution to East Asian cultural and religion and was called a distinct geographical expression. The personification of one country rouses a sense of patriotism and sacrifice in its denizens. Even the poorest land is called the beautiful motherland. Obsessive patriotism brings downfall and destruction and history has been mute witness to it. Much above poverty and class conflicts a common thread of unity ran across India. Apart from deep-seated traditions and inertia of Indian mind an inherent resilient force withstanding external and internal divisive forces made united India possible. However, political unity and political freedom were conspicuously absent in ancient India because of sheer negligence. Indian history paid scant attention to military and political triumphs and acquisitions, rather glorified selfless sacrifices relegating pecuniary considerations to oblivion. Though India preserved her greatness through trials and tribulations of history, yet it failed to be self-sustained. Even today, for its sustenance India owes a lot to the West to realize her socio-economic goals. (238 words)

PASSAGE – 8

No amount of improvement and reconstruction in education will bear much fruit if our schools and colleges are undermined by indiscipline. An impartial examination makes it clear that students and teachers alike need more of the spirit of discipline. If proper education is to be given, acts of indiscipline prevalent in our educational institutions have to be checked. Indiscipline may take the shape of group indiscipline or individual indiscipline. Group indiscipline is the worse of the two. While as individuals many of our students are as good as students elsewhere, the tendency to group indiscipline has increased in recent years. Many causes have led to his group indiscipline. For various reasons under a foreign regime, acts of indiscipline became frequent, often necessitated by the political activities, which were launched against a foreign government. While there may been justification for such indiscipline under different political circumstances, we feel that there is no justification on for such acts of indiscipline after the attainment of independence. The democratic constitution which the country has adopted permits the redressing of grievances through democratic machinery. It would be against all principles of democracy if such acts of indiscipline were to continue.

The real purpose of education is to train youth to discharge the duties of citizenship properly. All other objectives are incidental. Discipline, therefore, should be the responsibility of parents, teachers, the general public and the authorities concerned. There are some positive factors promoting discipline. The Indian student's natural tendency is to be disciplined. It is only when forces acts strongly on him that he may sometimes be led astray. He appreciates rules and is normally inclined to abide by them. Much can be done to encourage this trend in school and college life. Personal contact between teacher and pupil is essential. Emphasis is also to be laid on the role of the class teacher or tutorial guide in promoting general discipline and the welfare of the pupils. Further a greater responsibility should devolve upon the students themselves in the maintenance of discipline. Nothing is more calculated to develop a proper sense of self-discipline and proper behaviour than their enforcement, not by any outside authority with any symbol of punishment but by the students themselves. They should choose their own representatives to see that proper codes of conduct are observed. Another important method of bringing home to pupils the value of discipline is through group games. It is on the playing fields that the virtue of playing the game for its own sake and the team spirit can be cultivated.

Such extracurricular activities as Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, the National Cadet Corps, Junior Red Cross and Social Service activities will promote a proper spirit of discipline. The building up of a truly harmonious and united form of community life should be the endeavour of all progressive educational institutions. Besides these positive factors, certain negative factors also promote discipline. The discipline of the youth of any country depends upon the discipline that is exercised by the elders. It is a well-known fact that in all democracies election time is a time of feverish activity not always conducted in the healthiest spirit, and the utilization by politicians of immature minds like students for purposes of electioneering campaigns, with or without slogans attached thereto, is not calculated to promote sound discipline among students. It should be considered an election offence for any member or party to utilize the services of pupils under the age of 17 in political or civic campaigns. Besides, while the educative value of leading politicians addressing out students from time to time may be readily admitted, the tendency often is for the leaders not to speak to the audience before them but to a wider audience whose attention they wish to attract through the press. It is not necessary that every speech made by a politician should be a political speech.

Lastly, discipline among students can only be promoted if there is discipline among the staff. The teacher and educational administrator should realize that their activities are all being watched by their pupils. To what extent, therefore, both in their personal conduct and in their general attitude to all problems concerning their country, they have to realize that there are limitations within which they must act for the best interests of education. Ultimately, it is the school or college atmosphere and the quality of the teachers there that ensure proper codes of conduct and discipline among our students. (743 words) [IAS-2001]

PRECIS

Indiscipline greatly undermines the true purpose of any system be it education or political. In between individual indiscipline and group indiscipline the latter is worse. Sometimes, group indiscipline under a foreign regime might be just and necessary. As democracy provides constitutional and legal machinery for redressal of grievances, so indiscipline in any form has no place in it. The real purpose of education is to produce a disciplined citizenry. Discipline is a collective responsibility of all who matters. It is good to know that there is a congenial atmosphere for discipline to perpetuate in our society. Discipline is a natural tendency among our youth. Both the teachers and student community can equally contribute towards discipline. Discipline can effectively be restored not by outside authority but by students themselves. Initiatives should be taken by them for restoring discipline in institutions of learning. Games and sports and other extracurricular activities like NCC will help bring home the importance of discipline in life. They will foster self-discipline and good manners among the students. Our elders should practise discipline in their public life. Student community should not be exploited by leaders especially during electioneering. Such exploitation should be considered a crime. Speeches by political leaders should have educative value for the society at large. The persons manning educational institutions should be disciplined first before they expect their students to be disciplined. An ordered and organized learning atmosphere in educational institutions will go a long way in instilling sense of discipline among students. (248 words)

PASSAGE – 9

What is the use of a house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on? asked Henry David Thoreau. More than century later the Earth seems to be literally falling to pieces. Recent environmental set-backs include billions of tonnes of ice shelves breaking off in the Antarctic and unusually warm temperatures in different parts of the world. Panic reactions range from predictions of sinking islands to the lamenting the ill-effects of global warming induced by release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. The trouble is that we are too much obsessed with the problem of climatic change to even acknowledge the fact that the state of the planet hinges on much more. Climatic change is at best a symptom of a far more complex malaise, just as a fever is most often only an indicator of something that's gone awry in our body. It is time for a complete and comprehensive planetary health check that will examine the impacts of change in land use, loss of biodiversity, use of fertilizers and pesticides and consistent pollution of water bodies. This would overcome the limitations of evaluating how ecosystems work by reacting to just one major environmental concern as is happening in the case of global warming. These considerations have been responsible for the setting up of an international panel, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. Financed by four major international bodies, including the UNO and the World Bank, the eco-panel was set up without much fuss last June (2001), and is expected to determine, over a period of four years and at a cost of $21 million, the state of the Earth's ecosystems. The eco-panel will have source inputs from more than 2, 000 natural and social scientists the world over. Put simply, the Earth will go through the equivalent of a thorough physical analysis, so that biological, economic and social information can be collated to help scientists arrive at a final diagnosis. What is crucial, says one of the scientists, and is that no one has previously tried to work out how all of these conflicting pressures interact. The other important factor is how well we can orchestrate trade-offs and interactions in order to maintain ecological balance. Scientific bodies like the international Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have access to vast amounts of baseline data relating to the subject. Although critics points out that the information available is mostly from the North, leaving the concerns of the south largely unrepresented. The newly-constituted eco-panel will have to take all these aspects into account. For instance, it will have to ensure that data collection is more representative of the regions of the world. Today, we have the advantage of sourcing data from remote sensing satellites as well. The information thus gathered would have to be sorted out and analyzed by specialists and also by generalists before the panel comes out with specific periodic predictions, prescriptions and warnings. The healing process can begin only if all the scientific evidence and direction is made available to a wide audience and not just restricted to policy makers. Rather than depending solely upon governments to listen to and take corrective action, the focus should now be on convincing individuals and communities whose collective or individual action will eventually make the difference between regression and recovery.

[IAS- 2002]

PRECIS

The earth is now a sick planet suffering from more acute ailments than only climate change. Climate change is only one among the many symptoms of earth's sickness. There is an urgent need for holistic and comprehensive approaches to recover the earth from her ailing condition. Such approaches will examine the impacts all environmental concerns starting from change in land use to pollutions on the earth. This has led to the coming of a panel called Millennium Ecosystem Assessment in 2001. Financed by major world bodies including the UN, in four years of time this panel with assistance from thousands of scientists concerned will prepare a blueprint of final diagnosis of earth's ecosystem. The diagnosis report will be prepared on the collated physical data. The panel will ensure representations of all global regions in data collection in order to bridge the gap between north and south and also rely upon satellite information. The unanimously accorded healing report of the panel should be made public. Measures for recovering the ailing earth should evolve not only at government level but also at individual and community levels. (184 words)

PASSAGE – 10

Some wars in the past were quite as disorganizing and as destructive of the civilization of devastated areas as was the Second World War. North Africa has never regained the level of prosperity that enjoyed under the Romans. Persia never recovered from the Mongols nor Syria from the Turks. There have always been two kinds of wars, those in which the vanquished incurred disaster, and those in which they only incurred discomfort. We seem, unfortunately, to be entering upon an era in which wars are of the former sort. The atom bomb, and still more the hydrogen bomb, have caused new fears, involving new doubts as to the effects of science on human life. Some eminent authorities, including Einstein, have pointed out that there is a danger of the extinction of all life on this planet. I do not myself think that this will happen in the next war, but I think it may well happen in the next but one, if that is allowed to occur. If this expectation is correct, we have to choose, within the next fifty years or so, between two alternatives. Either we must allow the human race to exterminate itself, or we must forgo certain liberties which are very dear to us, more especially the liberty to kill foreigners whenever we fell so disposed. I think it probable that mankind will choose its own extermination as the preferable alternative. The choice will be made, of course, by persuading ourselves that it is not being made, since (so militarists on both sides will say) the victory of the right is certain without risk of universal disaster. We are perhaps living in the last age of man, and, if so, it is to science that he will owe his extinction. If, however, the human race decides to let itself go on living, it will have to make very drastic changes in its ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving. We must learn not to say 'Never! Better death than dishonour' We must learn to submit to law, even when imposed by aliens whom we hate and despise, and whom we believe to be blind to all considerations of righteousness. Consider some concrete examples. Jews and Arabs will have to agree to submit to arbitration; if the award goes against the Jews, the President of the United States will have to ensure the victory of the party to which he is opposed, since, if he supports the international authority, he will lose the Jewish vote in New York State. On the other hand, if the award goes in favour of the Jews, the Mohammedan world will be indignant, and will be supported by all other malcontents. Or, to take another instance, Eire will demand the right to oppress the Protestants of Ulster, and on this issue the United States will support Eire while Britain will support Ulster. Could an international authority survive such a dissension? Again: India and Pakistan cannot agree about Kashmir, therefore one of them must support Russia and the other the United States. It will be obvious to anyone who is an interested party in one of these disputes that the issue is far more important than the continuance of life on our planet. The hope that the human race will allow itself to survive is therefore somewhat slender. But if human life is to continue in spite of science, mankind will have to learn a discipline of the passions which, in the past, has not been necessary. Men will have to submit to the law, even when they think the law unjust and iniquitous. Nations which are persuaded that they are only demanding the barest justice will have to acquiesce when this demand is denied them by the neutral authority. I do not say that this is easy; I do not prophesy that it will happen; I say only that if it does not happen the human race will perish, and will perish as a result of science. (664 words) **[IAS-2003]**

PRECIS

Modern wars are as such devastating and more for the vanquished. The country that wins is not necessarily right or righteous; the country that wins simply has the most advanced technology. And advancement in technology does not imply that the country is more ethically advanced than its enemy. The writer concludes by saying that as technology increases (noting the atomic bomb); the potential for complete destruction of the world also increases. Humanity will be left with one of two alternatives: destroy humanity or to simply agree that war as such will eventually become too dangerous for either side to even assume that they could win. In other words, this second alternative suggests that there will come a point when the potential for destruction is so great that there can be no winner. This notion sounds very much like the movement for all countries to ban nuclear arms. If ever humanity wants to continue all nations need to control passions for war and revenge. Justice to the vanquished may have to be compromised. The writer concludes with a good amount of pessimism. He suggests a neutral group (like the United Nations) that can oversee the world's affairs. He suggests that without such an entity the world will perish. The blame for annihilation of humanity is to be put on science, he opines. (221 words)

PASSAGE - 11

Gautama, the Buddha, has suffered as much as anyone from critics without a sense of history. He has been cried up, and cried down, with an equal lack of historical imagination". Buddhism came to be widely known in the west in the latter part of the 19th century when a wave of scepticism spread over the world as a result of the growth of science and enlightenment. Positivism, agnosticism, atheism and ethical humanism found wide support. In much of the literature of doubt and disbelief, the name of Buddha is mentioned with respect. The humanists honour him as one of the earliest protagonists of their cause- the happiness the dignity, and the mental integrity of mankind. Those who declare that man cannot know reality and others who affirm that there is no reality to know, use his name. Agnostics quote his example. Social idealists, ethical mystic's rationalist prophets are all attracted by his teaching. Great as is the value of the Buddha's teaching for our age, we cannot hope to understand its true significance without reference to the environment in which he lived. This effort of historical imagination is not easy. To view the Buddha as a thinker of the sixth century B.C., living, moving and teaching in its peculiar conditions, is a task of extreme difficulty and delicacy; and the work of reconstruction can never be complete. But we may be reasonably certain that it yields a picture which in its main outlines, at least, must correspond fairly well to the reality. The supremacy of the ethical is the clue to the teaching of the Buddha. His conceptions of life and the universe are derived from his severely practical outlook. The existence of everything depends on a cause. If we remove the cause, the effect will disappear. If the source of all suffering is destroyed, suffering will disappear. The only way in which we can remove the cause of suffering is by purifying the heart and following the moral law. Man is not divine but is to become divine. His divine status is something to be built up by good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. The ego consists of the feelings that burn us, of the passions we brood over, of the desires that hunt us and of the decisions we make. These are the things that give life its dramatic character. There is nothing absolute and permanent in them. That is why we can become something different from what we are. The reality of the person is the creative will. When we deny the clamour of emotions, stay the stream of things, silence the appetites of body, we feel the power of self within our own being. For the Buddha, the impulse to dharma, to justice and kindliness is operative in things, and its efficient activity will mean the reduction of disorder, cruelty and oppression. Dharma is organic to existence and its implication of karma or right action is the builder of the world. There is not in the Buddha's teaching that deep personal loyalty, passion of love, and intimate dialogue between soul and soul resembling closely in its expression of earthly love. And yet the essence of religion, the vision of a reality which stands beyond and within the passing flux of immediate things, the intuitive loyalty to something larger than and beyond oneself, and absolute active in the world, is in him. We find in Gautama, the Buddha, in powerful combination, spiritual profundity and moral strength of the highest order and a discreet intellectual reserve. He is one of those rare spirits who bring to men a realization of their own divinity and make the spiritual life seem adventurous and attractive, so that they may go forth into the world with a new interest and a new joy of heart. While his great intellect and wisdom gave him comprehension of the highest truth, his warm heart led him to devote his life to save from sorrow suffering humanity. The greatness of his personality, his prophetic zeal, and burning love for suffering humanity made a deep impression on those with whom he lived; but his true greatness stands out clearer and brighter as the ages pass, and even the sceptical minded are turning to him with a more real appreciations a deeper reverence and a truer worship. He is one of those few heroes of humanity who have made epochs in the history of our race, with a message for other times as well as their own. (751 words) **[IAS-2005]**

PRECIS

Gautama Buddha has sometimes been criticized baselessly. The relevance of Buddhism is more prominent in rationalistic west. Buddhism is acclaimed even in a sceptical world swept by the wave of science and technology. Buddha is sought of equal reverence by humanist, atheist, agonist and humanist. Buddhism influences all tenets and beliefs in the contemporary world. The true significance of Buddha as religious preacher cannot be fully understood without the environment in which he survived. Empirical evidences are scarce to make an authentic and complete account of his surroundings. On the basis of anticipatory conceptions of the then peculiarities can provide a nearly real picture of him and his teachings. His emphasis on cause and effect relationship is based upon his practical outlook. The burden of suffering is loosened by destroying the cause of it. Man's divinity is not gifted but achieved by good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. Control of passions, apathy towards emotions and appetites empowers man. Dharma is central to existence ad right action is the builder of the world. Thus, Buddha was an epitome of highest spiritual order, profound moral strength and great intellectual reserve. His teaching infuses in man a strong craving for spiritual upliftment by purified actions. He was imbibed with unparalleled wisdom for comprehension the highest truth and spent his whole life to save the suffering humanity. The life of this epoch-making hero of humanity and his teachings, ideals above all his messages have timeless significance for all times to come. (248 words)

PASSAGE - 12

What part should reading play in our lives? It should certainly not be a substitute for action, not for independent thinking, nor for conversation; but it may be a help and stimulant to action; thought and talk; and it is capable of providing almost infinite pleasure. There on our bookshelves or on summons from a library are wits, wisdom, adventure, romance from all ages and from all over the world. Is there any wonder that our eyes sometimes stray wistfully to the bookshelves and away from a dull visitor, or that we shirk a tiresome duty for an exciting book?

Books or people? Reading or conversation, listening in to a broadcast or watching a television programme? Which is the better way to gain knowledge or to spend your leisure? Some fortunate people seem always to find time for both and to enjoy both almost equally. My great friend, Arthur Wanchope, a fine soldier, an able administrator and a very gifted personality, was a constant reader; yet always ready to lay aside a book for talk.

The advantages of reading over talk are, of course, many. We can select the book that suits our mood, can go at our own pace, skip or turn back whereas we cannot turn over two pages of a tedious companion or close him or her, with a bang. But reading too has its own drawbacks. It lacks the human touch, the salt of life, and is therefore a dangerous substitute for thought or action. Bacon in one of his essays observes that reading maketh a full man; conference (that is talking) a ready man; and writing an exact man. One would like to be full of knowledge, ready in speech and exact by training. What short of books have impressed me and what books have found a permanent place on my bookshelves?

To begin with my profession-soldiering. I do not believe that soldiering, a practical business, in which human nature is the main element, can be learnt from text-books. But for those who have grasped the principles of war and have understood that the human factor is the most important element in it. There is military reading that is quite fascinating and valuable. Real and re-read the campaigns of the great commanders, said Napoleon. I would venture to put it differently and would say that the lives and characters of the great commanders are what students of war should examine, since their campaigns are only incidents in them; and that the behaviour of leaders and of their men in the field is the real subject for study.

In my general reading history, biography and travel occupy a prominent place; and since I have spent a considerable proportion of my life in the East there are a good number of volumes on India and the Middle East. There is plenty of poetry on my shelves and a good deal of it is in my head. Poetry should dance in the mind, and blow one a kiss; or gallop to adventure with a cheer; or whisper gently of things past; not shuffle or slouch past with dark incomprehensible mutterings. Perhaps I am getting old, anyway I prefer the old poets.

Lastly comes what is sometimes called 'escapist literature, the books we read with no other aim, than to rest or amuse the mind; to forget the day's chores and the morrow's anxieties. This is perhaps the most pleasant form of reading for most, and I suspect the only form of reading for many. The volume chosen may either be a thriller or soother — a thriller to bring sense of adventure into the dull daily routine or a soother to rest tired nerves. Our grandfathers in their leisurely days were content with the stately, comfortable three volume novel, but that had passed before the beginning of this century.

You will choose your books as you choose your friends, with taste and discrimination; I hope; because they can tell you something of your profession and interests, because they are wise and helpful, because they can stir your blood with tales of adventure, or because they are gay and witty. I can only wish you will get as much pleasure from them as I get from my books. (Words: 703) **[IAS-2007]**

PRECIS

Like action and thinking reading has its distinctness. Reading acts as stimulant for action and thought and provides pleasure. It has universal significance for all ages. Books are unique and are treasures of wit, wisdom and entertainment. Conversing with people also attracts many. The writer cannot, for certain, choose one over the other. To decide whether reading or conversation is better depends on attitude, the pattern of thinking behaviour of the individual. Reading is, however, preferred over talking. Reading is easier done as ease than talking as the companion for the former is lifeless book. However, it lacks human touch and interactive values. The writer wonders that he has not been permanently moved by a book. Subjects that require practical experience cannot be mastered by mere reading. The study of war and great commanders is interesting. The campaigns are re-read with enthusiasm. However, the writer urges on importance of the study of the behaviours of the leaders and their men in the field. Reading is shaped by a person's age, acquaintances and liking. Such books adorn our shelves which fit to our personality in the changing time. Time is gone for reading voluminous literary work. Reading is mostly preferred for providing entertainment and respite to busy mind. It is shaped by the nature of the changing time and our taste and temperament and profession and interest decide what sort of book we should read. (234 words)

PASSAGE – 13

There are, of course, many motivating factors in human behaviour, but we would claim that nationalism is particularly worthy of study. Why is it particularly significant? Its significance lies in its power to arouse passionate loyalties and hatreds that motivate acts of extreme violence and courage; people kill and die for their nations. Of course it is not alone in this: people are driven to similar extremes to protect their families, their extended families or 'tribes', their home areas with their populations; and their religious groups and the holy places and symbols of their religions. However, these other loyalties are often rather easier to understand than nationalism. Parents making supreme sacrifices for their children can be seen as obeying a universal imperative in life forms, the instinct to protect one's own genetic material. This instinct can also be seen at work in the urge to protect one's extended family; but then the extended family, or on a slightly larger scale the 'tribe', can also be seen, in perhaps the majority of circumstances in which human beings have existed, as essential for the survival of the individual and the nuclear family. The nation is not generally essential to survival in this way. Of course, if the entire nation were to be wiped out, the individuals and their families would die, but the disappearance of the nation as a social unit would not in itself pose a threat to individual or family survival: only if it were to be accompanied by ethnic violence or severe economic collapse would it be life-threatening, and such cataclysmic events are not an inevitable consequence of the loss of political independence. Conversely, there is no logical connection between the gaining of political independence by a subject nation and increased life chances for its citizens. In many, perhaps the vast majority, of modern nations there is likewise no evidence that in defending the nation one is defending one's own genetic material; the notion that the citizens of modem nations are kinsfolk, while the citizens of (potentially) hostile neighbours are aliens, makes no sense in view of the highly varied genetic make-up of most modern populations,'

Devotion to one's religious group, like support for one's nation, is much less obviously to the individual's advantage than is defence of the family, but we would maintain that it can be more comprehensible than nationalism. It can be seen in ideological terms as the defence of a world view and its symbols, against rival world views, which are considered to be fundamentally erroneous and which, if successful, would force the conquered to act in ways abhorrent to their beliefs. While the defence of one's nation has often been seen as the defence of one's religion, and while modern hostilities between nations frequently do have a religious dimension, there are many serious national conflicts that have no clear religious element; the two world wars were fought in Europe with Catholic France, Protestant Britain, and Orthodox Russia opposing Germany with its mixed Catholic and Protestant population. Thus, while modern nationalisms may be linked to religion, many cases can be found without any clear religious dimension. Not only do modern nationalisms lack a religious element: there is often (to outsiders) no obvious ideological difference between rival nations. Hence, while defence of one's religion can be seen as defence of an entire system of beliefs, a world view, it is difficult in many cases to claim that this is true of the defence of one's nation. There is in fact a good case for seeing nations as 'imagined communities', and such would be the view of some commentators.

Such imagined communities could not, of course, exist unless they fulfilled a need. We can postulate that the need to belong to a community of some kind is a fundamental human characteristic, and that nations have arisen to fulfil this need, as earlier more primary communities - local, 'tribal', and religious - have lost their significance through economic and social change. But why should this need be fulfilled by nations, rather than some other type of unit? There is strong support in the literature for a view of nations as products of particular social and economic conditions operating from around the mid-eighteenth century, as products of 'modernization'. (707 words) **[IAS-2009]**

PRECIS

Among the motivating factors influencing human behaviour the sense of nationalism is more acute and extreme. Unlike other loyalties like loyalty to family, own tribe or religious group or community, the sense of nationalism runs across a particular country without any solid cause and also urges its ardent followers even resort to sanguinary clashes and spread hatred among one another. A person tries to protect himself or his family or tribe for existence. A nation as a physical unit holds importance of its subjects but as a social unit if it is ever disappeared cause no harm or brings no misery to its denizens. Loss or gain of political independence of a nation is not as life-threatening or harmful as ethnic violence or economic disruptions. In fine, the urge for defending a nation is not genetic. Though devotion for one's religious group is impersonal like that of nationalism, it is more understandable than the latter. The former has uncompromising ideological connotations. However, defending one's nation does always have religious causes; rather there are many unreligious conflicts today breed conflicts between nations. Protecting a nation is also not protecting a particular religious community as many religious communities survive within a nation. The need to belong to a community is basic human characteristic. The idea of a nation basing upon divergent needs of people is still incomprehensible. A common need be it socio-economic or modernization help build a nation. (237 words)

PASSAGE – 14

In many respects "Sakuntala" is comparable to the more idyllic comedies of Shakespeare, & Kanva's hermitage is surely not far from the Forest of Arden. The plot of the play, like many of the Shakespeare's plot, depends much on happy chances & on the super-natural, which, of course, was quite acceptable to the audience for which Kalidasa wrote. Its characters, even to the minor ones, are happily delineated individuals. Kalidasa makes no pretence to realism, but his dialogue is fresh & vigorous. In fact the dialogue of the better Sanskrit plays generally seems based on vernacular, and is full of idiomatic expressions. Indian playgoers did not demand the conflict of feelings & emotions which is the chief substance of serious European drama, but Kalidasa was quite capable of portraying such conflict effectively. His beauties & merits are tarnished by any translation, but few who can read him in the original would doubt that, both as poet & dramatist, he was one of the great men of the world.

There were many other dramatists. Sudraka, probably Kalidasa's approximate contemporary, has left only one play "The Little Clay Cart" (Mricchakatika). This is the most realistic of Indian dramas, unraveling a complicated story, rich in humor & pathos & crowded with action, of the love of a poor Brahman, Carudutta, for the virtuous courtezan Vasantasena; this story is interwoven with one of political intrigue, leading up to the overthrow of the wicked king Palaka, & the play contains a vivid trial scene, after which the hero is saved from execution at the last moment. It is notable for its realistic depiction of city life, & for its host of minor characters, all of whom are drawn with skill & individuality. It has more than once been performed in translation on the European stage, and, to a Western audience, is certainly the most easily appreciated of Indian plays.

Vishakadutta (?6th century) was the dramatist of politics. His only complete surviving play, "The Minister's Signet Ring" (Mudrarakshasa) deals with the schemes of the wily Chanakya to foil the plots of Rakshasa, the minister of the last of the Nandas, and to place Chandragupta Maurya firmly on the throne. The plot is exceedingly complicated, but is worked out with great skill, and play is beautifully constructed to lead up, like "The Little Clay Cart", to a pathetic scene where one of the chief characters is saved from death by impalement at the last moment.

Second only to Kalidasa in the esteem of the critics was Bhavabhuti, who lived at Kanyakubja in the early 8th century. Three of his plays – Malati & Madhava, "The Deeds of the Great Hero" (Mahaviracharita) and the later deeds of Rama (Uttararamacharita). The first is the love story with the pseudo-realistic background, full of incident of an exciting or horrific type, in which the heroine is more than one rescued from death, while the two latter plays tell the story of Rama. By Western standards as a dramatist Bhavabhuti falls short of those we have mentioned earlier. His plots are weakly constructed & his characters lack individuality. His greatness rests on his deep understanding of sorrow; in his treatment of the pathetic & the terrible he perhaps excels Kalidasa. (544 words) **[IAS-2010]**

PRECIS

Kalidas, by his original literature, was one of the greatest playwrights and poets of the world. His works like "Shakuntala" is enriched with the same humours, simplicity and fresh and lively dialogues as those of Shakespeare and Kanva. Kalidasa had even been able to portray effective the European literary trend depicting conflict of feelings and emotions. Among his contemporary dramatists, was Sudraka who wrote the famous Mricchakatika (The Little Clay Cart) which was a realistic dram depicting the love between Charudutta and Vasantasena. The drama also depicts a political intrigue of dethronement of King Palaka and is drawn minor but skilful characters. Like Mrichhakatika, Vishakadautta's Mudrarakshas ends with a pathetic scene about the last moment save of a convict from death penalty. The latter present the dethronement of Nanda dynasty and enthronement of Maurya dynasty. Bhavabhuti of eighth century was as esteemed as Kalidasa. His plays vividly depicted imaginary and exciting love story and tale of Ramayana. Western standard, however, Bhavabhuti is less a dramatist than the dramatist mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, the former excelled even Kalidasa in the treatment of the pathetic and the terrible. (184 words)

PASSAGE - 15

If then a practical end must be assigned to a University course, I say it is that of training good members of society. Its art is the art of social life, and its end is fitness for the whole world. It neither confines its views to particular professions on the one hand, nor creates heroes or inspires genius on the other. Works indeed of genius fall under no art, heroic minds come under no rule; a University is not a birthplace of poets or of immortal authors, of founders of schools, leaders of colonies, or conquerors of nation. It does not promise a generation of Aristotles or Newtons, of Napoleons or Washingtons, of Raphaels or Shakespears, though such miracles of nature it has before now contained within its precincts. Nor is it content on the other hand with forming the critics or the experimentalist, the economists or the engineers though such, too, it includes within its scope. But University training is the great ordinary means to a great but ordinary end, it aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind, at purifying the national taste, at supplying true principles to popular enthusiasm and fixed to aims to popular aspiration. IT is the education which gives a man a clear conscious view of his own opinions and judgements, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them, and a force in urging them. It teaches him to see things as they are, to go right to the point, to disentangle a skein of thought, to detect what is sophisticated, and to discard what is irrelevant. It prepares him to fill any post with credit and to master any subject with facility. It show him how to accommodate himself to others, how to throw himself into their state of mind, how to bring before them his own, how to influence them. He is at home in any society, he has common ground with every class; he knows when to speak and when to be silent; he is able to converse, he is able to listen; he is a pleasant companion and a comrade you can depend upon; he knows when to be serious and when to trifle, and he has sure tact which enables him to trifle with gracefulness and to be serious with effect. The art which tends to make a man all this is the object which it pursues as useful, as the art of wealth or the art of health, though it is less susceptible of method, less tangible, less certain, less complete in its result. (433 words)

PRECIS

The practical end of university education is the creation of right type of citizens in society. It does not aim at catering to the needs of some particular profession or at creating heroes, leaders and conquerors. But it has great, though ordinary aims. It aims at raising the general intellectual standards of society; elevating national tastes and purifying the public mind and thought. Further, it provides an education that enables man to understand himself correctly and express himself forcefully. University education inculcates in man the right attitude towards things and persons, a capacity to read between the lines and to adjust himself everywhere with ease and efficiency. Further, it teaches him to be at home in every company and to be graceful and effective in his conversation. (127 words)

PASSAGE - 16

These are two considerations which deserve at least a word in any discussion of the future of the Indian theatre. The first is the rapid development of the cinema as a competitive for prophesied favor. At first, in the early flush of cinematic triumph people—some of whom might have been expected to, know better—prophesies the extinction of the theatre. It is now clear that though here and there, temporarily, the theatre may be affected, the cinema cannot hope to replace the stage and elbow it out of existence. Experience in the West has shown that the stage will always be required as a federal studio. For the technique is different and great stage actors have, always, to their disgust, discovered that film acting is at least only second best to them; it cannot mean to them what the stage means. Something is lacking in the human touch. In the theatre heart responds to heart and mind acts on mind in a way unknown to the cinema.

Thus there is no danger of extinction to the theatre. On the other hand, the rivalry of the screen ought to and will put theatre to a new test and give it a new stimulus that may well lead to still higher planes of artistic achievement.

Finally, a word about a national language spoken, written and thought might do for the theatre in India. With the new awakening in social life the need of a common tongue is being increasingly felt. Much work is being done to bring out a common linguistic medium. The day when, it is accepted will be a great day for the Indian theatre, as it will be for all art in the country. But the theatre, because its life blood is spoken word, will gain most. With a common tongue, with a live national consciousness, the theatre will become to its own as definite instrument of national unity reflecting the national mind, interpreting the national heart and dreaming national dreams for the future. (336 word)

PRECIS

Two things are to be considered when we think of the future of the Indian theatre. The first is the rivalry of cinema. At one time it was thought that the cinema might oust theatre. But now it is admired that the stage must always be there as a feeder for the studio. Besides the great stage actors do not like the inhuman techniques adopted by the cinema. On the other hand, its challenge might make the theatre rise even to greater heights. Secondly, the adoption of a language may do much for the Indian theatre. Such a language is being formed. When adopted, it will enable the stage to keep the cause of national unity by dramatizing the national consciousness. (121 words)

PASSAGE - 17

It should not be forgotten that modern scientific inventions involving the use of steam and electricity, have destroyed the barriers of time and space. No nation, however, noble in its desires and ambitions, can live a life of isolation even if it desires to do so, intercourse with our nations for purposes of trade and commerce is no longer optional. If India's trade and commerce are to be carried on by Indians and not by foreigners and if the Indian people are to profit there from, it is necessary that our traders and commercial men should know as many modern languages as it is possible for them to learn. The bulk of the nation must be engaged in agriculture or manufacture or business. For all these pursuits, a knowledge of modern language is almost a necessity. Under these circumstances, to compel boys to devote the greater part of their time to the study of complicated, difficult ancient language like Sanskrit is such a flagrant misuse of energy that it is bound to reduce the general efficiency of the nation. It is high time that the nation should make up its mind and know that the study of Sanskrit like other luxuries, was for the few and not for the many. It is necessary only for purposes of research and culture, and for enriching the vocabulary of the vernaculars. For the many, the study of modern Indian and foreign languages must be insisted upon. (243 words)

PRECIS

Owing to the use of steam and electricity, international intercourse has become very easy and essential. If Indians are to carry on their own trade and commerce with foreign countries, they must learn as many modern languages as it is possible for them to learn. The study of Sanskrit should be undertaken only by a few who intend to make a research and enrich the vocabulary of the modern Indian and foreign languages. (73 words)

PASSAGE - 18

Military leaders have frequently been tempted to aspire to political leadership, and have frequently succumbed to temptation. Yet the whole training and experience of the soldier makes him less rather than more fitted to be a politician. The soldier is trained to take action on certain well-defined lines, and has in his hands a military machine which responds immediately and with precision to his touch; the governmental machine is much less precise and exact than the military, and is not rapid in action even in highly skilled political hands. The politician is trained in weighing up the conflicting interests of his supporters, and usually has to compromise; in war, if a commander compromises on essential, he fails. Furthermore, the time factor forces the commander in the field to adopt the best expedient in time available, which is usually short. The politician, on the other hand, is seldom forced to give an immediate decision; rather he delays in order to find the right and accurate answer, and he avoids any temporary expedient. The one has to seize time by the forelock and adopt the best expedient; the other can procrastinate in order to ensure that what he does is exactly right. In fact, the qualities, required by a soldier and by a politician are almost at opposite poles, and few men in history have possessed both kinds of qualities; there have not been many soldiers who have made good politicians, nor many politicians who have made great soldiers. (247 words)

PRECIS

The qualities that go to make a military leader differ from those required for a politician. The former controls a well-defined organization that answer immediately to his demands, whereas the politician must consider the views of supporters before he acts. The politician is often obliged to delay or to compromise, but the soldier has to take rapid decisions and act for the best in any emergency. Great soldiers, therefore, have rarely made good politicians or politicians great soldiers. (78 words)

PASSAGE - 19

You hear every day greater number of foolish people speaking about liberty, as if it were such an honourable thing. So far from being that, that, it is on the whole, and in the broadest sense, dishonourable and an attribute of the lower creatures. No human being, however great and powerful, was ever so free as a fish. There is always something that he must or must not do while the fish may do whatever it likes. All the kingdoms of the world put together are not half so large as the sea, and all the rail-roads and wheels that ever were, or will be invented, are not so easy as fins, You will find, on fairly thinking of it that it is his restraint which is honourable to man, not his liberty and what is more, it is restraint which is honourable even in the lower animals. A butterfly is freer than a bee; but you honour bee more just because it is subject to certain laws which fit it for orderly function in bee society. And throughout the world, of the two abstract things, liberty and restraint, restraint is always the more honourable.

It is true, indeed, that in these and all other matters, you never can reason finally from the abstractions for both, liberty and restraint are good when they are nobly chosen; but of the two , I repeat, it is restraint which characterises the higher creatures and betters the lower creatures; and from the ministering of the archangel to the labour of the insect, from the poising of the planets to the gravitation of a grain of dust - the power and glory of all creatures and all matters consist in their obedience, not in their freedom. The sun has no liberty. Its liberty will come - with its corruption. (305 words)

PRECIS

Restraint is a greater virtue than liberty. Liberty is a characteristic of the lower creatures; but man is not, like the fish, free to do whatever he likes. Even in the lower creatures, restraint is more honourable than liberty. We honour the bee which is subject to the laws of bee society more than the butterfly which is free to move. However, both liberty and restraint are good when nobly chosen. But restraint characterizes the higher creatures and raises the lower ones. All the objects in the universe obey certain laws. Even the sun and the dust of which our body is made, know no freedom. (106 words)

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